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Department of State TELEGRAM

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ACTION ARA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8066
INFO MEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 1487
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY GUATAMALA CITY
USCINCSO

S E C R E T MONTEVIDEO 1607 SECTION 1 OF 2

LIMDIS

CORRECTED COPY

CINCSO FOR POLAD
BOGOTA FOR MEYER

SUBJ: MITRIONE KIDNAPPING - TALK WITH PRESIDENT PACHECO

REF: STATE 126867

1. MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT NIXON WAS DELIVERED TO PRESIDENT PACHECO AT HIS HOME TONIGHT (AUGUST 6) AT 10 O'CLOCK. ON DELIVERING MESSAGE, I TOLD PRESIDENT THAT I WAS UNDER INSTRUCIONS TO EMPHASIZE OUR GRAVE CONCERN OVER SITUATION AT THIS MOMENT WHEN, FACED WITH AUGUST 7 DEADLINE, VERY LITTLE TIME REMAINED FOR OPENING COMMUNICATIONS WITH MLN TO AVERT TRAGEDY. I STATED USG HAD FULL CONFIDENCE THAT GOU COULD FIND SOLUTION FOR SAFE RETURN OF MITRIONE WHICH WOULD BE CONSONANT WITH GOU BASIC POLICIES AND INTERESTS.

2. DECLARING THAT WITH HIS PERMISSION I WANTED TO EXPRESS FRANKLY

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MY OWN AND DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS REGARDING PRESENT SITUATION SO THAT HE WOULD UNDERSTAND HOW WE FELT, I PROCEDED WITH FOLLOWING EXPOSITION.

3. URUGUAY HAS LONG STANDING HUMANITARIAN AND DEMOCRATIC TRADITION AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO URUGUAY'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. A WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE WITH KIDNAPPERS WOULD SEEM TO HELP MAINTAIN IMAGE OF A GOVERNMENT RESPECTFUL OF HUMANITARIAN VALUES.

4. IF NO COMMUNICATION WERE ENTERED INTO NOW BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND KIDNAPPERS, WE COULD SEE SLIM CHANCE OF FINDING SOLUTION AND LIVES MIGHT BE LOST THROUGH LACK OF ACTION.

5. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT AN EXCHANGE OF POINTS OF VIEW WITH MLN WHICH REDUCED MLN DEMANDS MIGHT STILL MEET GOU NEEDS BY DEMONSTRATING GOU FIRMNESS AND AT SAME TIME REFLECT FIDELITY TO URUGUAYAN HUMANITARIAN TRADITIONS.

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7. I TOLD PRESIDENT I WAS NOT PRESUMING TO SUGGEST HOW GOU SHOULD COMMUNICATE WITH KIDNAPPERS - WHETHER DIRECT OR THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES - BUT I WAS SIMPLY EXPRESSING MY HOPE THAT GOU WOULD UNDERTAKE CONTACT WITH KIDNAPPERS WITH VIEW TO FINDING SOLUTION. IF EXCHANGE OF VIEWS SHOULD NOT RESULT IN SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO GOU, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WOULD NO BE WORSENED, ON THE CONTRARY, IT WOULD SHOW URUGUAYANS, AMERICANS AND OTHERS THAT DOOR HAD NOT BEEN CLOSED BY GOU BUT RATHER THAT HUMANITARIAN EFFORT TO FIND SOLUTION HAD BEEN MADE.

8. IN MORE SPECIFIC VEIN I SUGGESTED THAT IF TWO MEN WERE TO DIE, KIDNAPPERS WOULD LOSE PRESTIGE WITH PUBLIC; BUT IF THEY WERE TO DIE AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD MADE NO EFFORT TO TALK OR MAKE CONTACT WITH

THE KIDNAPPERS. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT REACTION OF PUBLIC AGAINST GOVERNMENT COULD BE EVEN WORSE. I SAID I THOUGHT THAT PUBLIC EXPECTS A GOVERNMENT WILL BE MORE RESPONSIBLE THAN TERRORISTS.

9. FINALLY, I STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NO THREAT IN MY PRESENTATION; THAT I WAS SPEAKING ONLY AS FRIEND OF URUGUAY AND HOPED THAT IDEAS I HAD EXPRESSED MIGHT SERVE INTERESTS OF BOTH OUR COUNTRIES.

10. PRESIDENT PACHECO READ SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY THROUGH PRESIDENT NIXON'S LETTER SEVERAL TIMES, MAKING NO COMMENT ON IT AT FIRST. HE THEN SAID HE WAS GLAD TO HAVE RECEIVED PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BUT THAT FORMAL REPLY BY HIM WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PEIRANO FACIO. HOWEVER, HE WANTED TO MAKE CLEAR TO ME THAT HE RECEIVED THIS LETTER AS HEART FELT AND WHOLLY UNDERSTANDABLE EXPRESSION OF DEEP CONCERN, WHICH HE SHARED, FROM THE LEADER OF THE AMERICAN NATION. HE DID NOT SEE IN IT ANY EFFORT BY USG TO FORCE OR EXERT PRESSURE ON URUGUAY. HE THEN ASKED WHETHER HE COULD CONSIDER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AS PRIVATE AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATION TO HIM OR EXPRESSION WHOSE TEXT WAS INTENDED TO BE MADE PUBLIC. I REPLIED THAT USUALLY IN CORRESPONDENCE OF THIS TYPE DEPARTMENT INDICATES THAT THE DECISION ON PUBLICATION IS LEFT TO RECIPIENT OF THE MESSAGE BUT THAT IN THIS CASE, I HAD RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS ON THIS MATTER. I SAID I WOULD SEEK IMMEDIATE CLARIFICATION OF THIS POINT AND INFORM HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE PRESIDENT EXPLAINED HE HAD RAISED THIS POINT BECAUSE HE THOUGHT THAT IN HANDS OF THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO CREATE IMPRESSION OF DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN GOU AND USG, SOME OF LETTER'S PHRASEOLOGY MIGHT BE SUCEPTABLE TO MISINTERPRETATION AS INDICATING PRESSURE BY USG ON URUGUAY TO FORCE IT TO DO WHAT WAS NOT POSSIBLE UNDER URUGUAY'S CONSTITUTIONAL NORMS. HE REPEATED THAT HE DID NOT IN ANY SENSE SO CONSTRUE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BUT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ITS POSSIBLE MISUSE. I AGAIN SAID I WOULD SEEK TO CLARIFY THIS POINT IMMEDIATELY.

11. PICKING UP MY POINT ON CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION, PACHECO SAID THAT NO ONE SHOULD ASSUME THESE WERE CLOSED OR DID NOT EXIST. ON CONTRARY, GOU AND TERRORISTS HAD ALREADY PUBLICLY EXCHANGED VIEWS, REFERRING TO GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE OF AUGUST 4 WHICH IN PART SPOKE OF NEED FOR HUMANITARINISM, REPENTANCE AND RETURN OF CAPTURED ARMS BY TUPAMAROS. RESPONSE BY MLN IN LATEST NOTE WAS REITERATION ALL DEMANDS MADE PREVIOUSLY AS WELL AS SPECIFIC REJECTION OF ANY WIDENING OF NEGOTIATIONS ALONG LINES MENTIONED IN GOU COMMUNIQUE.

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S E C R E T MONTEVIDEO 1607 SECTION 2 OF 2

LIMDIS

CINCSO FOR POLAD

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13. AS FOR IMMEDIATE DANGER TO MITRIONE, PRESIDENT SAID IT NOT AT ALL CLEAR THAT TERRORISTS INTEND VIOLENCE AGAINST THEIR HOSTAGES IF

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DEADLINE PASSES AND THEIR DEMANDS NOT MET. HE PRAYED THAT THIS NOT SO AND REPEATED HIS OWN PERSONAL ANXIETY OVER PROBLEM, SAYING HE WAS CERTAIN I DID NOT WISH TO EXCHANGE PLACES WITH HIM AT SUCH A TIME. HIS ANGUISH WAS TWOFOLD: NOT ONLY WAS AN INNOCENT IN DANGER, BUT ALSO A FOREIGNER IN HIS COUNTRY, A REPRESENTATIVE OF A FRIENDLY NATION. SHOWING A LEVEL OF EMOTION HE RARELY DEMONSTRATES, HE DECLARED, "BETTER THAT IT WOULD BE A MEMBER OF MY OWN FAMILY".

[4] I RETURNED AGAIN TO THEME OF COMMUNICATION AND STRESSED THAT WITHOUT IT NO SOLUTION APPEARED LIKELY. THE PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE FOR ONE MINUTE THAT IN FACT THESE CONTACTS WERE NOT TAKING PLACE AT PRESENT TIME. HE SAID THAT AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, HE HAD NOT AND COULD NOT AUTHORIZE THEM BUT HE HAD NO DOUBT THEY HAD BEEN AND WERE BEING UNDERTAKEN.

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PER F. Devine

OFFICE ARA

CASE NUMBER 630373 Rockefeller

DATE 5/16/77

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